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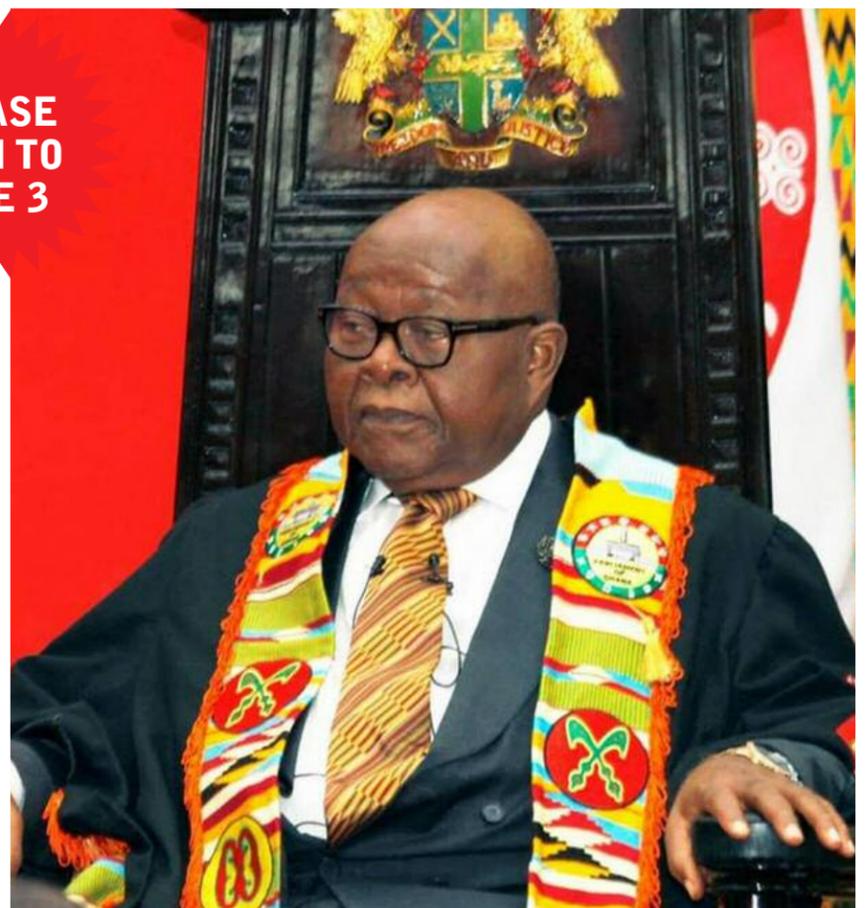
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Parliamentary Affairs

SIERRA LEONE: Sierra Leone Begins Review of Parliamentary Service Act



Honourable Doctor Bernadette Lahai former Minority Leader of Sierra Leone Parliament (2012-2018)

By Melvin Tejan Mansaray

The Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone with funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has commenced the review of the Parliamentary Service Act, 2007.

The kickoff of the legislative review process on Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th July, 2020 took the form of a two-day workshop at the Committee Room No.1, Sierra House of Parliament Building, Tower Hill Free-town.

The Parliamentary Service Act, 2007 is an act that was piloted as a Private Member's motion by former President Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma while serving as opposition leader. The Act has as its short title, "Being an Act to provide for the administration of Parliament and other related matters."

The Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone herald changes in the structures of the political and administrative

leadership, ushering five political groups and the introduction of new parliamentary units.

In 2019, following political tensions and rancor, it was agreed that a review of the Parliamentary Standing Orders 2006 and the Parliamentary Service Com-

mission Act, 2007, two vital working documents for the administrative and procedural functions of parliament be reviewed. On the first day of the workshop, the political leaders of parliament all made statements concurring that the times and circumstances have changed and thus the need for the same for the two documents.

An historic background on the establishment of the Parliamentary Service Commission, the need to review the Act, and presentations were made on areas

of concern on the parts and sections that needed to be amended with several questions posed and answered.

espoused through group work and plenary discussions lead by former senior lawmakers.

In an exclusive interview with one of the lead facilitators of the workshop, Honourable Doctor Bernadette Lahai former Minority Leader of Sierra Leone Parliament (2012-2018), former Vice President Pan African Parliament and current President Women Shadow Parliament described her impression about the engagements. Explaining the thrust behind the exercise, Hon. Dr. Lahai recalled that in 2007 the country enacted the Parliamentary Service Act which placed the Clerk as head of the Parliamentary Service and the Parliamentary Service Commission headed by the Speaker of Parliament for the effectiveness of parliament.

"Of course, it is thirteen years now since this law was passed and the environment has changed greatly socioeconomically and politically.

Since the law was enacted, this is the third general elections that we have done and the political parties heading the government has changed from 2007 Sierra Leone Peoples Party, the All Peoples Congress and now again a new dispensation with a unique configuration in which for a long time and the first time we have independent candidates, four political parties in parliament and have instituted several changes.

There is no need for us to look at the Act and look at other progressive Parliamentary Service Acts like in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia.

We thought that in the light of both internal and external changing environments, we need to upgrade the Act to be in line with current practices and political socioeconomic context," she said. On what are the obsolete aspects of the existing Act, Hon.

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of concern on the parts and sections that needed to be amended with several questions posed and answered.

On the second and final day of the workshop, a session on identifying parliamentary priority areas in the current Act were

Transparency and Parliamentary Openness

GHANA: PNAfrica Commends Parliament

As It Moves Motion For Private Members' Bill

By: Emmanuella Dadugblor
& Clement Akoloh

A leading Parliamentary Monitoring Organization (PMO), Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica), has commended parliament for taking a bold step towards creating the appropriate procedure for the enactment of a Private Members' Bill. The organization has for years been working towards the promotion of an open parliament as well as the enactment of a Private Member's Bill. A statement signed by the Executive Director of the PMO, Mr. Sammy Obeng describes the move as remarkable, stating that it will deepen the tenets of good governance.

According to PNAfrica, the enactment of the bill will go a long way to enhance the effectiveness of parliament in carrying out its constitutional mandate without any hindrance. "It is on this background that PNAfrica applauds highly the Leadership of the Parliament of Ghana for initiating such a ground breaking step in the democratic history of the Fourth Republic. This does not only enhance the effectiveness of Parliament in performing its mandate of law making, oversight and representation, but also advances a culture of openness through legislation that ensures engagement by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and citizens in the legislative process as they would be capaci-



Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament, Professor Aaron Mike Oquaye at his swearing-in ceremony stressed the need for the controversy over MPs initiating Private Member's Bill to be resolved

tated to initiate Private Member's Bills through Members of Parliament", the statement indicated.

The Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business in Parliament Honourable Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu on Thursday, July 16, 2020, moved a motion for Parliament to adopt a proposal for the enactment of Private Members' Bill in line with best practices at the global front.

After twenty-eight years of self-imposed restrictions in the implementation of the Private Members' Bills (PMB), the Parliament of Ghana has finally broken new grounds with the approval and adoption of a motion to begin the enactment of PMBs.

The prohibitive "Controversy" which was largely hinged on the interpretation of Article 108 of the 1992 Constitution, has largely been resolved with the adoption of this new move which effectively removes the barrier which had stalled its implementation throughout the Fourth Republic until now.

A Private Member's Bill, when passed into law will make it possible for lawmakers who are not representing the executive to introduce a Bill to the House. This will erase the age-old practice where bills are only presented to the house by a legislator who is acting on behalf of the executive.

Making the case for the adoption of the motion that Parliament deems it appropriate and fit to begin to enact Private Members' Bills on the Floor of Parliament on Thursday, July 16, 2020, the Majority Leader indicated that, both the Constitution and the Standing Orders of Parliament have adequate provisions for Members of Parliament and the Committees of Parliament to initiate laws on their own without recourse to the Executive as against the widely held view by previous Parliaments until now.

"Mr. Speaker, Section 15 of the Parliament's Act, 1965, Act 200 provides and Mr. Speaker I quote, ' Subject to the provisions of the Act and of the Standing Orders, a Member may introduce a Bill or propose a motion for debate or

may present a petition to Parliament which shall be disposed of according to the Standing Orders.' So Mr. Speaker, as far back as 1965, the Parliament of Ghana had granted itself the authority to make laws and to initiate laws suomoto," he observed.

"To construe Article 108 to mean that the initiation and subsequent introduction of legislation to Parliament is the preserve of the Executive, would constitute a self-denying ordinance implored by Parliament on itself. This would amount to Parliament ceding a part of its legislative powers to the Executive," he indicated.

Hon. Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu explained that due to precedence over the years, some persons are under the erroneous impression that only the Executive could initiate or introduce a bill in Parliament because it would have financial consequences on the Consolidated Fund, as established under Article 108. He said though Article 108 made it clear that no Bill introduced in Parliament should be at any cost to the government, it does not impose an omnibus prohibition on the initiation of all legislation by a Private Member, provided it does not have any financial obligation on the country.

The Majority Leader said article 108 confers powers on the speaker to exercise discretion to determine whether a bill falls within the purview of that article. Hence, the practice of leaving the proposal of bills to only members who represent the executive would amount to a dereliction of duty on the part of Parliament. He maintained that a move that gives Private Members a chance to introduce legislation will be historic. "Of course, the Speaker in exercising that power is himself or herself subject to article 296 of the constitution. To construe article 108 to mean that the initiation and subsequent legislation to parliament is the preserve of the executive will constitute a self-denying ordinance imposed by parliament on itself and this will mean parliament ceding part of its legislative powers to the executive." He explained.

The Suame legislator also touted some benefits of the Private Mem-

bers' Bill, stating that it is an opportunity for parliament to use laws as a social engineering tool. He also indicated that Ghana will meet one of the recommended benchmarks of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for democratic legislators, which urges democratic parliaments to enable private members to fairly exercise their rights to introduce and initiate legislation; a benchmark that has eluded Ghana for years.

The Minority Leader, Hon. Haruna Iddrisu seconding the motion, indicated that introducing the Private Members' Bill in the current Parliament would be historic and add to the country's democratic credentials.

He recalled that the Rt. Hon. Speaker at his swearing-in ceremony stressed the need for the controversy over MPs initiating Private Member's Bill to be resolved, adding that the adoption of the motion will resolve that controversy. "Mr. Speaker, to paraphrase your words, when you were being sworn into office, you said the controversy over a PMB must be resolved. Mr. Speaker as we speak today, at the end of the adoption of this motion, your words would be better stated that the controversy has been resolved," Mr. Iddrisu said.

The Tamale South legislator also commended the Speaker for his courageous effort to see to the realization of the Private Members Bill and his contribution to enriching the country's democratic jurisprudence since the adoption of the motion would mark his contribution as Speaker and the contribution of the 7th Parliament to enriching Ghana's democratic credentials. "I only can commend you for that courageous effort. The adoption of the motion would mark your contribution as Speaker and the contribution of the 7th Parliament to enriching Ghana's democratic jurisprudence," he added.

Calls for the introduction of a Private Members' Bill date back to the First and Second Parliaments of the Fourth Republic, under the leadership of the then speaker, Rt. Hon Justice Daniel Francis Kweipe Annan who indicated at a Speakers' forum that the practice of leaving the proposal of bills to the executive

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Science and Technology

GHANA: Parliament Approves Tax Waiver For Kuntunse Ghana Space Science And Technology Institute

By: Emmanuella Dadugblor

Parliament has approved a request by the Finance Committee to waive taxes and duties for the Ghana Space Scientific and Technology Institute (GSSTI) of the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC).

The waiver is on equipment, tools, and hardware in respect of the Ghana Radio Astronomy Project and Collation of the Satellite Earth Observation Ground Receiving Station at Kuntunse in the Greater Accra Region, and amounts to Four Million, Nine Hundred and Seven Thousand, Five Hundred and Fifty-Five South African Rands. (1.6 Million Ghana cedis) According to the Committee, preliminary assessment by the Ghana Revenue Authority indicates that GETFund Levy, Import NHIL, EXIM Levy, and Special Import Levy among other applicable taxes, duties, and levies are necessary to sustain the project and also save cost for the government.

Presenting the report to parliament on Monday, July 13, 2020, Chairman of the Finance Committee, Dr. Mark Assibey-Yeboah, said the project is birthed from a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by Ghana and South Africa in 2013, for the renovation of a redundant 32m-diameter telecommunications antennae, the Ghana Radio Astronomy Project at Kuntunse, into radio telescope. He indicated that the waiver is to maintain the attractiveness of the project to the partners, as well as reduce the burden of taxes and duties on government.

The radio telescope which is the biggest single-dish radio telescope

The project is birthed from a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by Ghana and South Africa in 2013, for the renovation of a redundant 32m-diameter telecommunications antennae, the Ghana Radio Astronomy Project at Kuntunse, into radio telescope.

in Africa is expected to be part of the Global Very Long Baseline Interferometry (VLBI) network of telescopes and will jointly undertake scientific research within the sub-region. It is also expected that this radio telescope will also be used for Single Dish Astronomy network, becoming both a research and training facility for students, scientists, and engineers in Ghana and the sub-region.

The Chairman of the committee says the country will attract international attention through this project due to her closeness to the equator, giving its radio telescope the widest view of the Milky Way galaxy.

He also indicated that the Committee thoroughly considered the request and found the approval necessary for the smooth implementation of the project hence the Committee's recommendation to the House to adopt the report. "The committee is satisfied that the request is in consonance with the memorandum of the agreement relating to the project. The committee, therefore, recommends to the house to adopt this report and approve by resolution, the request of duty amounting to

Four Million, Nine Hundred and Seven Thousand, and Five Hundred and Fifty-Five South African Rands, in accordance with the constitution of the republic."

The project when completed is expected to enhance the development of skilled human capital for sectors of the economy such as software, mechanical and structural engineering and various fields in science and technology. Seconding the motion for the adoption of the report, Member of Parliament for Kumbungu, Hon Ras Mubarak said the project will enhance the capabilities of the country in spatial art and therefore the need to approve the waiver as it poses several advantages to the country. "I think that we need to be availing ourselves to the opportunities that are available in accessing and harnessing the opportunities that come with also having some capabilities in space," he said.

Builsa North MP, Hon James Agalga said despite the relevance of tax waivers to projects, it is important that parliament gets the public to understand the reasons behind these waivers to avoid any mistrust or prevent public outrage. He intimated that the technical language of some of the projects prevents the ordinary Ghanaian from understanding its importance hence kick against it when it gets to the public space.

"What concerns me about some of these things is whether we give enough space to the people of this country to even understand why we do these things. Because honestly, when we [give] tax waivers and things, we are doing a very good job for our own development but the perception you get out there is that we just keep on giving tax waivers to our cronies and people we want to support, which I think it is because we don't take enough time to allow for the understanding of the people that we represent. For example, something like this, if you look at the whole terminology, it's so loquacious for people who don't understand the terminology to know what we are talking about. "He suggested. Meanwhile, the house has approved \$3.2 million in tax waivers for the supply of KAPEK scientific

mathematical instruments for use in the upcoming West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

The unit cost of each instrument is projected at Ghc75, an amount the minority decides as outrageous.

Presenting the report on the floor of the house, Chairman of the Finance Committee, Dr. Mark Assibey Yeboah said the procurement of the mathematical instruments is to prevent examination malpractices in the upcoming WASSCE.

"Again the request is to seek approval for the waiver of taxes amounts to the Ghana Cedis equivalent of 3,214,538 on KAPEK scientific mathematical instruments supply to the Ghana West African Examination Council for use during the examination.

The Committee observed that the supply of mathematical sets will help to combat examinations malpractice perpetuated especially by use of mathematical sets, calculator in examination halls by candidates and it will also provide three-in-one functionality which comes in cheaper than acquiring them individually and also help improve the rating of the certificate issued."

But some minority MPs have raised concerns with the unit cost of the instrument. Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa said the average mathematical set sells at Ghc12 hence procuring these at such costs puts a burden on the national purse. "Nakaraj Mathematical instruments are GHS12 and that's the most expensive one. This is GHS75. So what really went into this? We are told that it comes with some calculator and some other features. The report says that it is a scientific mathematical instrument with a calculator attached. The matter that we need to avert our minds to is value for money because if you attach a calculator to this, we are sure if you add a calculator to this package for GHS75, is it really value for money? And also it wasn't clear if it was a competitive tender," Mr. Okudzeto said.



Transparency and Parliamentary Openness

SIERRA LEONE: GoSL Pilots POAA/IMC 2020 Bills for Pre-Legislative Review

By Melvin Tejan Mansaray

The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) through its Minister of Information and Communication Mohamed Rahman Swaray on Monday 13th July 2020 delivered a presentation of two media-related bills for the consideration of Members of Parliament (MPs) with stakeholders and international development partners inputs ahead of their expected tabling in the Well of Parliament.

The public pre-legislative (pre leg) hearing at Committee Room No.1 Parliament Building, Tower Hill Freetown sensitively and saliently deliberated on the bills, 'The Independent Media Commission (IMC) Act, 2020,' and 'The Public Order Amendment Act, 2020 (POAA)'

The IMC Act and the POAA, 2020 (being an act of Parliament to amend the Public Order Act, 1965, Act No.46 of 1965 by repealing part five which deals with defamatory and seditious libel and to provide for other related matters) in particular has been a topic of discussion in Sierra Leone for the

The IMC Act and the POAA, 2020 (being an act of Parliament to amend the Public Order Act, 1965, Act No.46 of 1965 by repealing part five which deals with defamatory and seditious libel and to provide for other related matters) in particular has been a topic of discussion in Sierra Leone for the last fifty-five years



The public pre-legislative (pre leg) hearing deliberated on the bills; 'The Independent Media Commission (IMC) Act, 2020,' and 'The Public Order Amendment Act, 2020'

last fifty-five years.

Although the two legislations are separate but interrelated, it was a precondition that because of public interest and safety, the IMC Act should be amended to capture safeguards against errant journalists.

Part Five of the 1965 Public Order Act (POA) criminalizes libel and many local and international observers have been calling for its repeal, citing countries like Ghana and Liberia as good examples in West Africa, where such a law does now exist.

In short, opponents of the POA law called it outdated and antidemocratic.

The public discussion on these bills comes following the initial withdrawal of the POAA, 2020 by the Leader of Government Business Hon. Mathew S. Nyuma citing procedural lapse. The Bill's withdrawal attracted a torrent of criticism and condemnation from within and outside of the media and civil society circles.

The bills are set to be tabled in Parliament anytime soon and ahead of their tabling for the first and other readings and possible enactment, a position it (POA, 2020) last reached but dead on arrival as Parliament could not allow it to be read for the second and other times.

Hon. Nyuma Leader of Government Business justified his action to withdraw the POAA 2020 a decision that he said was taken in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition. This action was hugely vilified by the Media and proponent of the bill. Hon Nyuma argued that they followed the procedure

as set out in the Parliamentary Standing Orders (SOs) despite failing to advance an argument that is predicated on the national constitution of Sierra Leone.

President Julius Maada Bio while campaigning for office in 2018 promised to repeal the Criminal and Seditious Libel law, a promise his predecessors have not been able to fulfill for decades now.

During the pre-leg, in a rather unusual manner, members of interest groups were allowed time to deliver presentations on their positions, respond to questions from Members of Parliament to be discussed when the bills finally get to the plenary sitting of Parliament.

In their brief statements, opponents and proponents of the bills made varying presentations as captured below.

Hon. Mathew Nyuma Leader of Government Business urged his audience to bring out their views citing that there are conflicting laws (IMC and NATCOM Act) over the period of license renewal either for one or two years and the POA also having ridiculous fines that must be reviewed.

"I am here to register our commitment to what we started without abrogating the law. We are here to make a decent law that will at the end of the day serve the interest of Sierra Leoneans not just a sect of people. This is part of the consultation for a better Act," Hon. Nyuma said, furthering that the purpose of the POA No.46 of 1965 was not to curtail press freedom as perceived by many people. The Act addresses lawlessness, loitering, trade disputes, protection of public and private properties, etc, but the issues of

libel and sedition have attracted huge public attention, Hon. Nyuma said, noting that, "it is only part five of the POA that deals with libel and sedition and that is the part that the Government has pledged to repeal and is what is before parliament."

Hon. Chernor Ramadan Maju Bah Leader of the main opposition, All Peoples Congress (APC) party and co-chairman of the pre-leg emphasized that the perception created following the withdrawal of the POAA 2020 gave the wrong picture justifying that they did what is said in the SOs also urging that it should not be misconstrued to mean that MPs are not ready to proceed with the amendment. Hon. Bah said: "We make laws for the majority of the people of Sierra Leone, not a few. We want justifications to what your objections are because we must secure and protect the interest of the people we are representing. Don't use your access to the pen or airwaves to muzzle us. We are hardly muzzled because we have been elected by people to represent them. We need your expertise but in doing that, please endeavor to consult, we are here to serve you. We want to assure you that whatsoever job we do will stand the test of time."

Mohamed Rahman Swaray Minister of Information and Communication said that the repeal of the criminal libel law is something that is close to the heart of the President and it has been two years since he started the process.

"This is a very major campaign and manifesto commitment from His Excellency the President. Many have wondered why of all legislations, the President is so bothered about repealing the criminal libel law when particularly he was at the raw end of activities of the media. He was the most vilified, the most libeled during the run-up to the 2018 campaign. The President is of the firm conviction that the media has an important role to play in national development, so irrespective of the personal hurt he suffered in the past, he thinks we have to encumber the media. We should not criminalize practitioners in the cause of their duties, so he gave me marching orders to ensure that I work with all parties so that the repeal is done. This is a task I treat very seriously and on that grounds and reasoning that is why we are here to restart the process of the repeal. I am very overwhelmed with the solidarity from civil society, members of the press – the most primary ultimate beneficiary. With this repeal, every

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Parliamentary Affairs

SIERRA LEONE: Observing WYSD... MP Bash at Government's Interventions

By: Melvin Tejan Mansaray,
SIERRA LEONE

Honorable Abdul Latiff Sesay Member of Parliament (MP) representing Constituency 075 Port Loko District, Northern Sierra Leone has strongly criticized the intervention of the Government of Sierra Leone on issues affecting youth, saying that President Maada Bio's third address to Parliament exposed several inadequacies in the policies and implementation of youth interventions.

Hon. Latiff was speaking in an exclusive interview against the context of the marking of the year 2020 World Youth Skills Day (WYSD) observance, saying that because he himself is a youth, the subject of young people is of a

deep interest to him.

"Looking at the way things are going for our youth, it is very appalling. We are seeing the focus of the Government in focusing on the construction of car wash centers, building of boats, establishing farms for the youth to engage in substituent farming and they have also what is called the Youth Service. Basically for me, I don't think these are the areas the Government should be focusing on at this moment in time," Hon. Latiff said.

He continued that "the Government should focus on improving the youth by creating technical and vocational training institutions and also offer scholarships to those youth so that they can develop new skills or improve on already existing skills."

He said the Government is jeopardizing the future of the future leaders in youth which is worrying and needs much more attention. In the governing Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) 'New Direction Peoples Manifesto' for the 2018 general elections, Part Three (Human Development), Page 43 (Empowering our Youth), the Government said, to overcome youth unemployment it is putting the issue at the center of its fight against poverty and peace consolidation, promising to make



Honorable Abdul Latiff Sesay,
Member of Parliament (MP) representing
Constituency 075 Port Loko District,
Northern Sierra Leone

the youth problem a topmost priority focusing on; technical and vocational education and training (TVET), the National Youth Scheme, Economic Empowerment, Sports, music and performing arts, public works and agriculture. Two years down the line, in his address on the occasion of the opening of the Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, President Julius Maada Bio talked about 'Youth Employment and Youth Entrepreneurship,' noting that youth are key drivers of development and are regarded as 'partners today and leaders of tomorrow.'

He said his Government has increased the participation of young people in decision-making processes and leadership roles having established 190 Chiefdom and 16 District Youth Councils nationwide.

"Government has developed capacity and entrepreneurship skills with a skills development project and a skills development fund component, a graduate internship programme, youth demonstration farms, youth business groups and the setting up of a youth entrepreneurship and employment project. Government has also established opportunities for thousands of youth with the construction of Car wash centers, youth farms, fisheries project, and the youth service schemes," President Bio told lawmakers.

Hon. Latiff said the Government's interventions are new in the establishment of car wash centers, this he said means a relegation of the youth to debasing jobs while the kids of officials/politicians are being paid for thousands of dollars in order to be professionals in colleges aboard.

"And we are here instead of trying to help our youth to be educated or skillful, we are instead sending them down to be fishermen, subsistent farmers, car washers, etc, that can't help us in the future," Hon. Latiff emphasized.

Speaking on the theme (Skills for a Resilient Youth in the Era of COVID-19 and beyond) of this year's WYSD and its local implications, Hon. Latiff said the COVID-19 makes a need for youth to develop new skills daily because they are at home and doing nothing.

ing.

He said: "To be honest with you, education alone is not enough, there are times when you will be having your qualification but you cannot access any job; but to be honest with you, when you have a skill, you can create your own business, make your own money and create employment for others. That is why it is very important for us as youth – be educated or not – to be skillful, because if education fails you your skills will not fail you."

Proffering an alternative to what he criticized as a debasing government approach towards the young people in Sierra Leone, Hon. Latiff said the Government has a key role to play to discourage the culture of laziness and dependence among young people.

"Most times when the youth are gathered in one area, they are basically more or less discussing about football, things that are not even relevant; I think Government should engage the youth and see how best they can create more technical and vocational institutions, at least at chiefdom levels, so that we can have our youth enrolled there to learn new things so that at the end of the day – be it short or long term, they can contribute immensely in terms of the socioeconomic development of our country," Hon. Latiff said.

Some people hold the view that the youth themselves are not showing willingness to emancipate and improve on their lives and livelihoods. They say some youth do not want to work and wants everything ready-made for them.

Hon. Latiff said the youth are willing to work and better their lives but agreed that a culture of laziness permeates in some aspects, for example the habitual requesting from adults, "but I believe if only the Government can encourage them to go into skills and technical and vocational training institutions or offer them scholarships, to be honest with you, I believe they are more than willing to grab such opportunities."

The use of technology is more akin to young people these days,

"Looking at the way things are going for our youth, it is very appalling. We are seeing the focus of the Government in focusing on the construction of car wash centers, building of boats, establishing farms for the youth to engage in substituent farming and they have also what is called the Youth Service. Basically for me, I don't think these are the areas the Government should be focusing on at this moment in time,"

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Health

GHANA: Obuasi And Anyinem To Get Trauma Hospitals As Parliament Approves Facility Agreement

By Emmanuella Dadugblor

Parliament has approved a loan facility of fifty-six million, one hundred and fifty-three thousand, five hundred euros (€56,153,500.000 from Deutsche Bank AG and Global Services (UK) Limited to finance the construction. The facility will aid the construction of Trauma Hospitals in Obuasi in the Ashanti Region and Anyinam in the Eastern.

The facility will also aid the construction of an Accident and Emergency Centre at Enyiresi Hospital and the rehabilitation of Obuasi Health Centre.

The project is expected to be completed in 3 years with an additional three hundred and fifty-six (356) days Defect Notification Period (DNP) and forms part of the approved list of priority projects for implementation captured in the 2020 Budget and Financial Policy Statement of the country.

The terms and condition of the loan include the facility amount of €56,153,500, project cost of €55,000,000, an Upfront fee of €825,000, that is 1.5 percent flat of the facility; an Agency fee of €178,500, Legal fee of €150,000, tenure period of 10 years, repayment period of 8 years, a grace period of two years and an interest rate of 7.5 percent per annum.

The facility agreement was presented to the House on Wednesday, July 1, 2020, by Charles Adu Boahen, a Deputy Minister of Finance on behalf of the substantive Minister Ken Ofori, and referred to the Finance Committee for consideration and report.

Chairman of the Committee Mark Assibey-Yeboah submitting the Committee's Report in Parliament on Tuesday, July 14, 2020, said government is committed to the delivery of quality health care to citizens hence is ensuring the provision of health infrastructure under Sustainable Development Goals on health care delivery "The project is intended to provide modern health infrastructure to give the people enhanced health care delivery. The project also forms part of measures to meet government's commitment to the provision of universal health care delivery to the people of Ghana in line with government's vision under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG3)"

Dr. Assibey-Yeboah said the project is informed government's decision to equip health facilities with the required medical equipment to be able to work effectively. "The object of the loan is to finance the construction of the required infrastructure and the provision of medical equipment and ancillary services to ensure that the beneficiary hospitals are fully operational and befitting their status. It will also provide the enabling condition

to attract the needed health care professionals" he indicated.

The trauma hospitals according to the chairman will have an Accident and Emergency Department, Main theatre, Imaging area, Pharmacy unit, laboratory, Administration block, Wards, Out Patient Department (OPD), Public Health Department, Physiotherapy Department, Support facilities, Pathology and Maternity among others. The location of Anyinam and Enyiresi which is halfway between Accra and Kumasi would ensure that travelers and people within these areas would have access to good health-care infrastructure and in case of any unfortunate accident, the victims would have access to professional healthcare in good time.

The Enyiresi Hospital is also expected to be retooled and remodeled while the Obuasi Government Hospital will also see refurbishment and retooling under this project.

Hon Mark Assibey-Yeboah also indicated that the Committee observed that Obuasi in Ashanti Region and Anyinam in the Eastern Region presently do not have any major government hospitals while the existing Obuasi Health Centre is presently ill-equipped and inadequate to meet the health needs of the burgeoning population of the catchment area.

Commenting on the report, Member of Parliament for Adaklu



Charles Adu Boahen,
Deputy Minister of Finance

Hon. Governor Kwame Agbodza, said the two projects are in line with the expectations of a district hospital but the only difference is that the two are trauma hospitals with 12-bed triage unit strategically located along some major highways. He said though the project is being undertaken by a local contractor, the legislature must not shirk its responsibility to provide oversight of the work. He also commended government on its decision to award the contract to a local Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) contractor.

The project will be undertaken by Universal Hospitals Group Limited under an EPC contract with the government of Ghana.

GHANA: PNAfrica Commends Parliament

As It Moves Motion For Private Members' Bill

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is not good enough and members should work towards proposing bills themselves. This call was rehashed at the inaugural ceremony of the 7th parliament of the fourth republic on January 7, 2017, when the speaker of parliament, Rt. Hon Aaron Mike Ocquaye called for a resolution of the controversies involving the introduction

of a Private Members Bill. He said "The controversy relating to private members bills should be resolved. It is tragic that currently, it appears to us that Members of Parliament cannot initiate legislation independent of the Executive. Article 108 of the Constitution provides that once a bill has financial implications, it can only be introduced by the Executive. The narrow view has been taken that every bill has financial implications including

the paper on which it is printed and the Clerks who work on it who are paid by government", Rt. Hon Ocquaye said.

Many countries including Norway, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, India, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Burundi, Tanzania, and Uganda have a Private Member's Bill which helps to fill in the lapses in their national laws.

The enactment of a Private Members' Bill will enable individual Members of Parliament, civil society and other interested organizations to propose bills to the House. This will strengthen the oversight, lawmaking and representative roles of MPs and breaks the long-standing tradition that allows only the executive to propose bills for enactment in Parliament. This decision allows the leadership of the House and the Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee to now set forth the appropriate processes and procedures for the enactment of the Private Members' Bill.

Transparency and Parliamentary Openness

GHANA: Attack On Auditor General Is An Attack On Parliament

Parliament Urged to State its Position on President's Orders for Auditor General to Proceed on Leave

By Clement Akoloh

The Parliament of Ghana has been urged to take keen interest in the plight of the Auditor General, Daniel Domelevo, who has been ordered by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo to take his accumulated leave of over 167 days compulsorily.

It has been averred that since the Auditor General is more of an officer of Parliament than an officer of the Executive, an attack on the Auditor General is an attack on the Parliament of Ghana.

Though some democratic institutions and some concerned individuals have come to the defense of the Auditor General whose Office is supposed to be insulated by the Constitution from external interference, not much has been heard from the Legislative arm of Government which is supposed to be the true representative of the people and the representative of professional bodies through their committee system.

Since the Presidency issued a release about the decision taken by the President on June 29, 2020, directing the Auditor General, Daniel Domelevo to take his alleged accu-

mulated leave of 123 days in addition to his 2020 annual leave which brings the total leave days to 167, the Auditor General has come out to indicate that he had already began his leave with his reverence to the President's Office but pointed out that there was no legal nomenclature as accumulated leave as the President referred to in his letter. In addition to a call by some 500 Civil Society Organizations for the President to rescind his decision because his order flies in the face of good governance practices and cuts a slur on his Government with regards to the fight against corruption, there is also the view that the President's actions may be encroaching on the sovereignty of Parliament as an institution.

A statement by the 500 CSO members across the country, signed by the CSO platform on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), endorsed by the Right to Information Coalition and the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition indicated that:

"We find the entire episode and the justification for the President's action regrettable and inconsistent with both the letter and spirit of the 1992 Constitution. In our estimation, such actions only weaken our quest for good democratic governance grounded in the principle of checks and balances, rule of law and the pursuit of public accountability."

This position is supported by the First Deputy Whip of the Minority, Ibrahim Ahmed, who indicated in an interview that the Auditor General is more an Officer of Parliament and not the Executive and therefore if the Executive arm is seen ordering an officer of Parliament against the public interest while Parliament shows no concern, Parliament may be sending out the wrong signals.

According to the Deputy Minority Whip, it seemed Parliament was condoning wrong doing with its silence on the issue and since the Auditor General is an officer of Parliament, an attack on him is an attack on the institution of Parliament.

"Parliament is condoning the perpetuation of wrong doing. If you consider the work that Parliament does, the Auditor General is not part of the Executive. The Auditor General is an officer of Parliament and therefore if the President gives orders from the Presidency for the AG to go on compulsory accumulated leave, then his action first of all: is an attack on Parliament, because our investigation has revealed that the decision was being taken because the AG dared to cite the Office of the Senior Minister for investigation for possible acts of corruption."

The Deputy Minority chief whip and a Member of Parliament for



Auditor-General Daniel Yao Domelevo

Banda, Ahmed Ibrahim bemoaned the fact that Parliament as an institution has not taken any action on this matter.

"If Parliament doesn't make any intervention on the President's actions concerning the directive, then we are not playing our role well as the true representative of the people. Our oversight role over the Executive is incomplete without an independent Auditor General who will mention the issue as it is.

"We can't sit down unconcern for only the 500 Civil Society Organizations to seem to be the once fighting for the right of the Auditor General when we are supposed to do more. Right now over 2,000 CSOs have come out to condemn the directive by the President and we as Parliament are sitting aloof. What signal are we sending out there except for people to conclude that we are condoning wrong doing by the Executive?"

"If we sit here for the President to go on with what he is doing by ordering the Auditor General to go on compulsory accumulated leave, then tomorrow the President can order even the Speaker to go on compulsory leave and there would be precedent to back his action," he said.

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most young people today do have sophisticated cell phones and can now network among themselves very easier and quicker with the advent of facebook and Whatsapp in particular, Hon. Latiff said, young people should harness more of the power of technology today.

"There are different ways to this, the Government has the biggest leverage, and they do have structures everywhere. The Government must ensure that it uses existing structures in an internet age, via phones young people can access any portal or can access information that the Government is designing for them at any giving them. They only need to be shown the site or be instructed as to how to do the necessary filling of forms. As I said, the Govern-

ment does have a big task and role to play," Hon. Latiff said.

In Sierra Leone like many other African countries, politicians are blamed for manipulating and orchestrating events and incidents that always cast a slur on the reputation of young people. During electioneering periods, it is a common practice for politicians to galvanize young people who are given drugs and money to perpetuate acts of violence and other forms of lawlessness.

Hon. Latiff agrees that from across all sides of the political divide this is a reality that must be changed if the

youth are to be a force to reckon with. Hon. Latiff said: "Sure, politicians are to be blame for the current state of affairs among youth. During elections campaign, we are mostly using the youth to help us to canvass the electorate to vote for us, so that is why whenever there is a mismatch or when the youth are abandoned, the blame is levied on us the politicians."

Quizzed on his opinion that the current Government is not serious about its interventions towards the youth, Hon. Latiff said: "to be honest it is my candid and not a political view. Why I said the Government is not serious about youth is the fact that we were having mining

companies basically before SLPP came into governance and all of a sudden they shut down those companies and now we are having huge amount of youth unemployment and yet, the President told us that they have created car wash centers, etc, for the youth. To be honest with you, it is a relegation of our young people down to that level. Those youth that were working in mining companies must have acquired skills that are still needed in that very industry. I think it is the onus of the Government to try to act right not just to use the youth for political games, no. They should ensure that they empower the youth so that they themselves can deliver in the future."

SIERRA LEONE: Observing WYSD ... MP Bash at Government's Interventions

General News

SIERRA LEONE : Sierra Leone Has the Right Population It Can Manage - Statistician

By Melvin Tejan Mansaray

Sonia Magba Bu-Buakie Jabbie, Director, Demographic Health and Social Statistics, Statistic Sierra Leone says Sierra Leone has the right population that it can manage but the nation has to be careful to ensure that it do not grow too quickly because it is a poor nation.

He was speaking in an exclusive interview focusing on the observance of World Population Day (WPD), 11th July 2020.

Jabbie says this year's WPD celebration is quiet, marred by the impact of the Coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic making it impossible to stage massive outreach events apart of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) having virtual meetings, discussions and media engagements on public awareness about the importance of WPD.

"As we know, these are sensitive times so we have to celebrate World Population Day sensibly," he says.

The UNFPA has since 1989 been observing this day, reflecting on global population growth and its attendant consequences since the world's population attained the five billion mark.

"Putting the brakes on COVID-19: How to safeguard the health and rights of women and girls now," is the 2020 WPD global theme.

Jabbie says the global theme has a strong local resonance, noting that COVID-19 has affected each and every nation on earth with some countries more so than others.

"The novel Coronavirus has decimated major populations around the world. For instance, the United States has recorded over one hundred and thirty two thousand deaths since its first recorded case of COVID-19. We are seeing an increase in the cases. COVID-19 has killed a lot of people and is still killing a lot of people globally and



Sonia Magba Bu-Buakie Jabbie, Director, Demographic Health and Social Statistics, Statistic Sierra Leone

this has an impact on especially the women and children," Jabbie says.

He furthered that due to the COVID-19 lockdowns in different countries and struggling health systems, countries are finding it very difficult to cope with sexual reproductive health services, adding that, "and also gender based violence is on the rise, which this year's theme is mainly focusing on as outlined by the UNFPA mainly because of the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls."

Asked if COVID-19 has reduced the world's population and still posed a threat to women and girls, Jabbie says: "It is reducing the world's population but COVID-19 is a new virus for which there is no cure, a hundred years after the 1918 global pandemic of the Spanish flu which also took away a good number of the world's population."

He says because of increasing rate of traveling from countries, COVID-19 has quickly spread around the world wiping out people even in nations with stellar health systems while the worst has been feared for Africa but fortunately, some African countries have been able to tackle the outbreak, citing reference to Sierra Leone which did believably as a result of the experience gathered from the Ebola outbreak in the year 2014.

The use of contraceptives for family

planning and the emerging trends of teenage and unwanted pregnancies, child marriage are major threats to a growing world population dominated by women population.

Jabbie says the situation of unwanted and teenage pregnancy and early marriage are contending issues in Sierra Leone noting that schools were closed, "so girls of school-going age that would normally be going to school are at home. They are not moving around doing something constructive. Everybody has been in lockdown. We all know the instance of the five-year-old girl (Kadija Saccoh) that was allegedly raped and died recently. These are all aspects that have been caused by the COVID-19, because if she had been in school and comes home when her parents are at home, maybe this would not have happened. So these are some of the impacts; increase in teenage pregnancy and violence against women and girls."

He echoed that such trend manifested itself during the Ebola disease outbreak in Sierra Leone, arguing that when there are lockdowns and people are at home, the idle mind becomes the devil's play ground.

"There is an increase in unwanted pregnancies, teenage pregnancies because of the impact of COVID-19 in the country. The normal health care facility focuses on taking care of COVID-19 patients. Many hospitals in more severely attacked countries do not even have room for other patients, it is only COVID-19 patients that are taken in these hospitals," Jabbie says.

Many women and girls are scared to access hospitals because of the COVID-19, Jabbie says, adding that the use of contraceptive is not very high in Sierra Leone, "but when you have a pandemic like COVID-19, women who would normally access their contraceptives would not necessarily be doing so on a regular basis for fear of going to the clinics or health facilities where they can access these contraceptives. People really take their time to go to the hospitals now, except if they are severely ill. People will shy away for fear of con-

tracting the COVID-19."

Jabbie continued that COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions will prevent people from getting the normal access to health care that happens when society is in a state of normalcy, having a negative impact on access to contraceptives and other medications as well.

The Statistics Sierra Leone says as a matter of data on unwanted and teenage pregnancy that are causing overpopulation, the pandemic is still ongoing making the collection of statistics a process and not an event.

"We are still collecting data, but from the Ebola experience that we had, the statistics for that period showed an increase in teenage and unwanted pregnancies. When people are in abnormal conditions like we are in now under COVID-19, there is always this increase in teenage and unwanted pregnancies and the global UN projection is seven million if lockdowns continue for the next six months," Jabbie explained.

On whether Sierra Leone is over populated or under populated, Jabbie had a paused, carefully contemplating his response.

He says: "I would say that Sierra Leone has the right population for our surface area (71,740km) as a nation. The population is increasing but we know that we do not have a very high population, so I would not say the country is overpopulated but also not say it is under populated."

"I think we have the right population that we can manage but we have to be careful to ensure that we do not grow too quickly because we know that Sierra Leone is a poor nation. As at now, the resources are not adequate to ensure that everybody lives a very comfortable life. There are strains here and there. The Government is making a good effort with support from the international community but we need to ensure that we grow at a healthy rate," Jabbie opined.

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Parliamentary Affairs

SIERRA LEONE: Sierra Leone Begins Review of Parliamentary Service Act

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Dr. Lahai said that the composition of the Commission was very restricted because at that time, there were only three political parties in parliament without independent candidates and the senior staff of parliament were not organized.

“At that time, we did not have a disabled in parliament but over the years disable persons are coming. In order to make the Parliamentary Service Commission as inclusive as possible, we now have to take into consideration the current configuration of four political parties, independents, Paramount Chief Members of Parliament for which we now have two females and also a disabled MP.

The senior staff are now well organized and that means also the quorum needs review,” she said, highlighting also that even the way the Clerk was appointed – wherein they use to come from the open service seconded to parliament having gone through the cadres and were expected to be apolitical which disappeared since 2011 when Clerks were former parliamentarians and politically active.

“We are again saying that we should go back to the status quo, where the Clerk should be a competitive position that is advertised, people apply and go through the processes and then elect three well-deserving candidates for the President to choose any.

But for now, the Clerk is being appointed by the President, but we want the parliament’s independence and autonomy so we want it to have a big say in the appointment of the Clerk. Also, we did not have qualifications for the Clerk in the current Act and this time around we are proposing that the Clerk have a minimum educational qualification of a bachelor’s degree and with maybe ten years of parliamentary and legislative administrative experience.

We are also saying that the Clerk should not be anybody who has contested for the political party immediately before his appointment as the Clerk. These are some of the changes we are proposing to make to the existing law,” Hon. Dr. Lahai said.

During the engagements, some lawmakers expressed reservations about the establishment of too many departments of parliament as per the provision of the proposed law. Hon. Dr. Lahai said at first the Parliament used to have seven departments but a provision was made for the creation of more departments as and when the need arises. She said: “The contention was that some departments should only be made to be units within departments.

For example, the Budget Office should be under the Directorate of Finance and the Department of Parliamentary Studies goes under the Human Resources, Management or Department of Library, Research, Documentation,

and Training.

We would try to see where they are best suited so as to reduce the number of departments which also have financial implications – many directors will entitle to certain emoluments.”

She continued that although the financial autonomy of parliament has been improved, there is a need for parliament to have total autonomy over their budget.

“Most parliaments especially in the sub-region have total autonomy over their budget; they prepare their budget based on the needs of the parliament and take it to the President. Once it is approved by the President and approved by parliament, it becomes their budget not subjected to any interference by the Minister of Finance. In Liberia, 1.5% of the annual total national budget is the budget of parliament, and the same happens in other parliaments.

We are now looking into calculating on average what has been the percentage of the national budget of parliament and parliament will also make a realistic budget to ensure effective functioning in terms of the oversight function of the parliament. With that, parliament will further improve on this document by coming with an actual percentage of the national budget based on realistic futures,” Hon. Dr. Lahai explained.

The retired lawmaker and career politician, Hon. Dr. Lahai said as part

of upcoming engagements, the draft working document will be worked on, placed in the legislative language and setting that is required, presented to the Leadership of Parliament to be evaluated and after the submissions of the forty participating MPs, a draft document will be presented to the rest of the MPs in a pre-legislative meeting to discuss and further improve on the document until such a time that the document is ready to be tabled in parliament, Hon. Dr. Lahai said. She however said that she is not aware about any set timeline for the completion of the document but noted that considering the important changes that are to be made, “the earlier this bill is brought to parliament the better it is.”

In her appraisal of the inputs of MPs, Hon. Dr. Lahai said: “I think I have been very much impressed by the seriousness of the MPs because the first day of the workshop was well attended and the participation was very good, lively, and inclusive.

The final day also showed no signs of fatigue on the side of MPs who sat for the rest of the day actively. I am encouraged by the participation despite the fact that MPs have a lot of other engagements.

I am optimistic that this bill will go through because it is meant to improve the workings of parliament, the lives of MPs and staff of parliament. It is going to be a Private Member’s motion. I am positive that it will go through.”

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He says unlike other countries where the population is aging, Sierra Leone has a youthful population but with threats from migration and urbanization.

“Migration and urbanization are posing a threat to some urban areas. For example, Freetown has a huge influx of people from the rural areas, always coming in looking for greener pasture. This always puts a stress on the infrastructure; electricity, water resources, even living space. You would see that people build in hazardous areas and

Freetown is a mountainous area – where there could be rock falls or mudslides. We have had all of these experiences in Freetown, so when there is a rapid increase in urbanization and it is not well planned, people just flooding into these areas, these issues occur.

People are living in slums or slum-like conditions, these are not ideal conditions and they have an impact on

health care; remember the mudslide that happened around Regent Community few years ago. This is when there is a rapid expansion especially on the hill side, tragedies like this happened. Urbanization is having a negative impact and if people were not embarking on rural-urban migration the way it is happening now; if it is well planned, it could be more constructive than destructive and we will benefit from it. If people stay in their

areas, they could also help develop their areas and keep their populations stable,” the Statistician says.

Nonetheless, Statistics Sierra Leone projects that they are expecting the population of Sierra Leone to be between Seven point Nine million (7.9m) and Eight point One million (8.1) people in the year 2020 based on the data and projections of the 2015 Population and Housing Census.

Sierra Leone Has the Right Population It Can Manage - Statistician

Finance

GHANA: \$878,364 Tax Waiver Approved For Construction Of GRA IT Training Academy

By Emmanuella Dadugblor

Parliament has approved an amount of \$878,364 in tax waivers for the construction of the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) IT Training Academy project in Tema.

The project is in line with government's efforts to modernize the tax revenue system in the country and improve on the usage of IT-based business processes for better service delivery. It will also enable the GRA to improve IT-literacy and provide skills to ensure the proper use of IT applications within the GRA.

Presenting the Finance Committee report for the approval of the agreement on equipment, materials, and services to be imported and procured locally for the project, Chairman of the committee, Dr. Mark Assibey-Yeboah said parliament in 2016 approved funds for the project and the GRA has also done its part by making available land and other internal arrangements for the successful execution of the project. "In order to successfully undertake the proj-

ect, Parliament approved an amount of €3.5 million euros with a grant of €1.5 million euros in 2016, the GRA has already prepared the land and completed all the needed evaluations as well as acquired all the needed permits to undertake the project", he disclosed.

Dr. Assibey-yeboah said the waiver is in fulfillment of the government's part of the agreement with the consulting agency, GOPA Infra GmbH, a German engineering consultancy. He intimated that under the terms of the agreement, the consultant and its foreign staff are exempted from the payment of all taxes duties and levies to be imposed in Ghana in connection with the procurement of services, equipment, materials, and supplies necessary for the performance of the services under the project.

He disclosed that the completion of the project will result in efficiency in the activities of the GRA, which will boost revenue collection in the country. "Mr. Speaker, completion of the project will increase IT literacy rate among staff thereby equipping them to work more efficiently with two main operational applications (TRIP and GCMS) and report more effec-



Chairman of the Finance committee, Dr. Mark Assibey-Yeboah

tively," Dr. Assibey-Yeboah said.

Another benefit of the project, Dr. Assibey-Yeboah mentioned, is the establishment of an efficiently managed IT Academy which will encourage and instill a professional attitude among staff to remain competitive.

Seconding the motion, MP for Adaklu, Hon. Govers Kwame Agbodza noted that the master agreement in 2016 between the government and the consulting agency already made provisions for tax waivers therefore approval of the committee's report is in place. He however called for clarity in the principle for the waiver of taxes to contractors "Mr. Speaker,

if you look at the appendix for the report, we are basically seeking tax waivers on a basic construction project. Every item in the building is captured here. Is it the principle that now, local contractors can get tax waivers on buildings entirely? If that is the case, will that cover everything including when GET-FUND projects are being done? Is it simply because it is Ghana Revenue Authority? There must be a principle under which this is done. The principle is not clear enough. If it were to be only imported items, Mr. Speaker, it would have been better but if I see tiles [in the report], we are manufacturing tiles in this country", he inquired.

Taking his turn to contribute to the debate on the floor, Member of Parliament for Kumbungu, Ras Mubarak said the approval of the tax waiver is essential and long overdue. "Mr. Speaker, if we want more roads, schools, hospitals, and greater facilities, then we have to pay taxes and in paying taxes, we need to improve the efficiency of the tax-collecting agency through enhanced capacity building so that they will be able to do the jobs they're enjoined to do to give us more revenue to build the things that we are expected to build" Ras Mubarak argued

By Emmanuella Dadugblor

The creation of the Independent Tax Appeals Board (ITAB) will cost GHC2.5 million for the first year, the Deputy Minister of Finance, Kwaku Agyeman Kwarteng has disclosed to parliament.

He made this known while addressing Parliament during the second reading of the Revenue Administration (Amendment) Bill, 2020. The Bill is an amendment of the Revenue Administration Act, 2016 (Act) which seeks to set up an Independent Tax Appeals Board (ITAB) to address pleas presented against tax decisions made by the Commissioner-General. This will allow for the payment of shortfalls in tax liability resulting from omissions without the payment of penalties.

GHANA: Independent Tax Appeals Board (ITAB) To Cost GH¢2.5 Million

The creation of the ITAB is expected to reduce the resources the Ghana Revenue Authority spends in pursuing some taxes.

Mr. Agyeman Kwateng said the purpose of the Bill is to amend the Revenue Administration Act, (Act 915) to establish an ITAB to hear and determine appeals against tax decisions made by the Commissioner-General to allow for the payment of a shortfall in tax liability resulting from omissions or misstatements without payment of a penalty, and require subcontractors of government contracts to submit Tax Clearance Certificates (TCCs) to about one thousand voluntary taxpayers. This will lead to the registration or voluntary compliance of about 1,000 taxpayers.

Chairman of the Finance Committee of Parliament, Dr. Mark Assibey Yeboah, said the Bill when implemented, will instill confidence investors. "The Committee observed that the establishment of the Independent Tax Appeals Board to hear tax matters prior to the adjudication in the law courts is expected to instill confidence in investors and reduce the time spent in litigation for both taxpayers and the Ghana Revenue Authority. The committee further noted that currently, taxpayers who fail to register with the revenue authorities or who fail to submit returns or make misstatements in documents or omit relevant information from documents can only be penalized when identified by the revenue authorities".

Dr. Assibey indicated that once

the bill is passed, taxpayers will no longer encounter the strenuous challenges they experience when they make a disclosure on infringement on tax laws. "This imposes a costly burden on revenue administration. The voluntary disclosure procedure included in this Bill will, therefore, relieve taxpayers who voluntarily make disclosures of these infringements of the tax laws and make it easy for the revenue authority to collect the revenue".

The chairman also disclosed that the bill will encourage more people to register voluntarily to pay taxes without the fear of paying penalties, a major deterrent for people who may want to open up about tax infringements. "It will also encourage more taxpayers to also come forward and register with

the authorities without the fear of being asked to pay penalties. It is further expected that the passage of the Bill will lead to an increase of corrected returns filed with the revenue authorities."

Commenting on proceedings, MP for Kumbungu, Hon Ras Mubarak emphasized the need to exercise caution in granting amnesty to companies, corporations, and individuals that breached tax obligations, to ensure that there were safeguards in the law in order not to excessively abuse the process.

"But if we are not careful, we will see year-in, year-out there are still people violating tax obligation. That is why I want [us to] safeguard that if you were to violate your tax obligations and got amnesty for year one or year two, there should be punishment if the violation of the tax obligation continues, to serve as a deterrent for others" he noted.

General News

APC Legislators Call for Inquest into Killing of Protesters

By Melvin Tejan-Mansaray

Some eight sitting opposition All Peoples Congress (APC) Members of Parliament (MPs) from Bombali District, Northern Sierra Leone have called on President Julius Maada Bio and his Government to institute an independent, impartial and effective inquiry in that violent siege and clampdown of protesters in Makeni city that reportedly claimed five lives, injured scores of people and led to the arrest of over fifty people.

In a press release dated 19th July, 2020, the MPs said: “We urge the SLPP Government of President Julius Maada Bio to promptly institute an independent, impartial and effective inquiry in that violent siege on Makeni city and to ensure that perpetrators face the full force of the law.”

Makeni City is the heartland of the opposition APC party and also the birthplace of former President and current Leader and Chairman of the APC party, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma. Previous general elections results showed that this city overwhelmingly voted in favor of the main opposition APC party.

On Friday 17th and Saturday 18th sources say the Electricity Distribution and Supply Agency (EDSA) officials attempted to remove a 1.65 megawatt generator from Makeni to be relocated to another northern city, Port Loko, but this move was faced with stout resistance from some people who felt that such a move would cause electricity shortage to a city that is known for uninterrupted electricity supply.

Mohamed Rahman Swaray Minister of Information and Communications in a related press release dated 18th July, 2020 said that the attention of the Government has been drawn to issue of public disorder that has led to the potential loss of lives and properties destroyed in the city of Makeni emanating from an attempt by EDSA to relocate a 1.65 Mega Watt thermal power generator, owned and operated by the Authority, to Lungi in the North-Western Region following stakeholders consultations.

The Information Minister went on to say Makeni and its environs is 100 percent powered by the Bumbuna hydroelectric power and only seeks

recourse to standby generator during the 10-day usual downtime when the Bumbuna Hydro is up for maintenance noting that the Government is poised to improve the energy sector in the country amidst COVID-19.

“The Government wishes to assure residents of Makeni city and its environs of its commitment to maintaining its regular power supplies without any disruption as this stop-gap measure is taken to address the energy challenges in other part of the country,” the Minister said, urging Residents to remain calm, warning that, “anyone or group of persons that undermines the public peace will face the fullest force of the law.”

Stanley Bangura, Publisher Provincial Times newspaper and Proprietor Hope Radio Makeni City reported seeing five dead bodies and numerous persons with injuries also confirming that there was a stakeholders engagement but noted that the outcome was not conclusive.

Alhaji Kanja Sesay Minister of Energy said that they had held consultations with stakeholders at Makeni including the Mayor informing them about the temporary relocation of the generator but unfortunately the Ministry could not get their promised response following the engagement. He blamed the stakeholders for not informing the residents.

“The Ministry of Energy is perturbed by reports of violent skirmishes in Makeni over an attempt by the authorities to relocate a standby 1.65MW Caterpillar engine from Makeni to Lungi. The Ministry of Energy roundly condemns this unlawful behavior from ill-motivated youths in Makeni,” the Energy Ministry said.

The Ministry added that Lungi is in dire need of electricity especially ahead of the resumption of flights at the Lungi International Airport, underscoring that: “The Ministry states for the avoidance of doubts that it held consultative meetings with stakeholders in Makeni, including but not limited to the Mayor and her Deputy, the Provincial Secretary North, Representatives of the AIG, Media Groups and Civil Society Groups. The issue of the relocation of the thermal plant was clearly presented and discussed in those stakeholders’ meetings. Government further assured all the stakeholders that despite the relocation, Makeni would continue to enjoy

uninterrupted supply of power from the Shield Wire Arrangement along the 161kv Line from Bumbuna Hydroelectric Station.”

The Sierra Leone Police said that with support from the Military, fifty one male have been arrested and transferred to the country’s capital Freetown to assist them in their investigation. The Police however promised to update the public on the extent of the loss of lives and damage of properties during the public disorder, noting that an initial curfew that was imposed to maintain law and order has been lifted as calm has returned to the city.

“The Police and the Military are patrolling the township and its environs; thereby addressing all policing issues requiring their attention and intervention,” the Police Media Unit release said about the riotous and public disorder incidents of the 18th and 19th July, 2020.

The North East Young Generation of the governing Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) said that their supporters were attacked and their regional party office at Kamal Street was destroyed by thugs in the name of protesters.

They said: “We wish to inform the general public that the SLPP has no hands in such negotiations,” also condemning all forms of violence against its innocent supporters and property.

“We are calling on the necessary stakeholders to investigate and bring to book all those involved in such activities,” Abdul Y. Turay Regional Young Generation Leader SLPP North East said, adding that: “As we wait on the Police to carry out an investigation to maintain peace and refrain from all forms of violence.”

In their demand for immediate investigation into what they described as the “needless killing of protesters in Makeni,” Deputy Opposition Leader Hon. Ibrahim Ben Kargbo, Deputy Whip Catherine Zainab Tarawally, and six other MPs said, “We are particularly perturbed by, and we expressly deplore the (unprovoked) use of excessive and disproportionate lethal force by police and military personnel against unarmed protesters exercising their civic rights.”

They however called on the Police to be humane and respectful of the rights of individuals in their custody and not to subject them to torture



Sierra Leone President, Julius Maada Bio

and ill treatment.

The MPs criticized the manner in which the so-called stakeholders’ engagement was done.

“Regarding the critical prior public engagement, we believe that if there was a proper and adequate dialogue with and sensitization of the community, there would have been full understanding of the rationale for government to relocate the city’s backup generator to another region. Such critical engagement would have ensured everybody’s participation in Makeni, a city which has always been peaceful,” they said.

The MPs also blamed the authority’s way and manner of removal and relocating of the said generator.

“We the MPs from Bombali further express disappointment with what we believed was the Ministry of Energy’s insensitivity to the situation regarding the situation regarding the rush and odd time (late night of the 17th July 2020) that the officials (from EDSA) went to remove the 1.65Mega Watt backup generator from the electricity station in Makeni. Such rush and odd timing only fed into the suspicion created by the lack of adequate stakeholders’ and community engagement on the issue.”

The eight APC MPs however called on their Makeni people to maintaining the peace for which they are known for while calling on the attention of national and international human rights organizations to this ‘most unacceptable loss of loss of lives and maiming of protesters’, adding that, “meanwhile we urge the SLPP Government of President Julius Maada Bio to promptly institute an independent, impartial and effective inquiry in that violent siege on Makeni city.”

The APC MPs however called for justice, fairness and accountability, while they “extend profound condolence to the bereaved families for the loss of their loved ones and wish speedy recovery to those with bullet injuries.”

Transparency and Parliamentary Openness

SIERRA LEONE : GoSL Pilots POAA/IMC 2020 Bills for Pre-Legislative Review

Continued From Page 5

member of the society benefits," Rahman said while applauding Parliament's renewed vigor.

George S. Khoryama Chairman IMC said the PRELEG was a great opportunity to deliberate on the legislation.

He said that the proposed IMC bill will empower his Commission, describing the POA as a sword of dormitories hanging over journalists in the country, thus, "it should be repealed." He thanked the President for initiating the process noting that, "as the Media Regulator, the IMC want to see a professional, responsible media and if the IMC is given the requisite power, we will work with SLAJ and all other donor partners to ensure that journalism in Sierra Leone takes its rightful position." He said there are many good journalists in the country but so too are the bad ones for whom the good ones must not suffer, "hence we need the IMC to be empowered to enforce professionalism." He said a 2019 survey of fifty-two media institutions across the country revealed that most media houses exist in name but by no means standards of the profession with some having no staff, no equipment, space, etc, using this as an excuse for the empowerment of his commission. "In only 2019, the IMC received about twenty-nine complaints from the public with some being very serious. This year alone, we have received about fifteen complaints already, some of them are very serious, the more reason that the IMC should be given the power to curtail those deviant press houses and journalists in the country. In view of the above, the IMC needs that power to effectively regulate the media in the country. The enactment of this law is by no means a trade-off to suppress the press but will save the press from damnation to salvation," he said.

Ahmed Sahid Nasralla President Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) said they were in Parliament to lobby MPs to first repeal the criminal libel law and pass the new IMC bill.

"At the international level, the criminal libel is an embarrassment to our diplomats and to the people of Sierra Leone. At the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review on human rights our diplomats are embarrassed for not owning up to agreed treaties signed by the government," Nasralla said, adding that the libel law deters investors from the media and it is only by its removal and allowing of economic forces to regulate the media that is when the image of the country's human rights credentials will be bol-



stered. He said that character assignation should not be tolerated although his research shows that majority of libel cases are filed by politicians while the majority of the victims are journalists and at the dismay of the public. Nasralla said the criminal libel saw the closure of an indigenous local printer Atlantic Printers putting indigenes out of business and that if this law is repealed, more women will also come into the media without any fear. "The IMC bill has all the level of safeguards," he said but cautioned that even politicians now own media houses. He spoke about concerns around SLAJ's representation to the IMC, objecting to the proposal that the IMC to audit media institutions saying, "The IMC should not be overburdened by the work of other statutory agencies if it is to be effective."

Dr. Francis Sowa Chairman Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG) said the media in Sierra Leone like the case of George Floyd in the USA, cannot breathe adding that for over fifty years a giant or Goliath has stood on top of the media fraternity in the country. "Honorable Members, today we in the media are calling for help like Floyd, our eight minutes have started long ago, we may be in our final last minute, the media industry like Floyd is shouting it can breathe. Unlike Floyd, we at the MRCG comprising ten national media organizations are optimistic that our call is being heeded. We are confident that we will breathe," Dr. Sowa said, adding that they are not calling for power without responsibility as they have popularized the civil libel and other ethical committees established to uphold standards promising that they will be bold to call out colleague journalists when they fall short and imploring for the repeal to be done for God and country.

Jeremy Ben Simbo representative Center for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL), a civil society organization echoed almost similar sentiments expressed by previous speakers adding that they have also been victims of circumstance while imploring the Government to exemplify its 'talk and do' slogan by implementing what it prom-

ised in its manifesto. "Having this law does not match the respect of democratic principles," he said, stating that the IMC should be well supported to get rid of the prevailing circumstances.

It was a cumbersome process for some participants to deliberate on the twin legislations with proportionate zest as almost all of the initial contributors were mono-focal about just the repeal until urged by the Leader of the main Opposition party to also discuss the IMC bill.

Mustapha Solomon Kandeh Assistant Inspector General of Police, Director of Operations Sierra Leone Police said they are always at the crossroads in maintaining an equilibrium between the rights of citizens and that of the freedom of the media or press. "I am here to give the SLP's position on the repeal of the defamatory and criminal libel law," underscoring that with this law, truth is not a defense in the giving circumstance. He said the Police have a right to arrest, detain, search, investigate and prosecute journalists for the criminal acts of libel and sedition, stressing that decriminalizing part five comes with the concern of what is the remedy for defamation. He recommended that "SLAJ advance self-regulation through the IMC, the IMC should be strengthened to bite and bite harder. That journalist should have a license to practice and that license should be withdrawn for continuous breaches. There needs to have a Gate Keepers Court that will expeditiously adjudicate over matters and last, journalists should be fully employed with attendant benefits, this will minimize bad journalism," the AIG said.

Katie Hannam British High Commission representative thanked MPs for discussing progressive media laws in the country just ahead of the upcoming UN Universal Periodic Review.

"The UK believes in and stands for democracy and human rights, a free and independent media is an essential component of a functioning democracy with greater stability and prosperity," she said, noting that the media has a role in informing the public to make informed decisions and challenge governments through a strong, robust and independent media. She said media freedom is fundamental for a prosperous society, noting that to build the capacity of the IMC, the British Government has provided seven million pounds for which consultant work has begun.

Apparently, the Information Minister was given an opportunity to present the IMC Bill following which several issues were brought to the fore.

That both bills are government's and not private, the insuring of media houses is almost impossible due to the exorbitant premium charges that insurers might charge where a media outlet is in default, that the IMC does not need to audit the books of media houses, that the proposed Section No. 20 of the IMC (Funds of the Commission) indicating that persons or organizations can fund the IMC - which the current Chairman argued is because state subvention is delayed (last received subvention in 2019) be reviewed, Section No. 24 (Radio, television, etc, license,) be modified to not give the IMC a power that is beyond the object of its legal mandate, Section No.25 (Grant of license) must reflect the spirit of an independent media commission, free media rather than what one media owner described as a 'worrying weaponizing of the IMC', that Section. No. 34 (Renewal of Registration Certificate), subsection No.3 be rewritten to not read in its current form that "The procedure for renewal of registration shall, with the necessary modification, be the same as an application for registration." Also, newspaper owners say advert rate cards for newspapers have not been reviewed for the last fifteen years and advertisers are hostile to entertaining such consideration; that media houses must compulsorily pay the minimum wage of six hundred thousand to employees, etc.

It was expected that the following day (Tuesday 14 July, (2020) the bills were to have been laid on the table of the House but unexpectedly, the House's adjourned plenary sitting was canceled without any explanation.

"Honorable Members, today we in the media are calling for help like Floyd, our eight minutes have started long ago, we may be in our final last minute, the media industry like Floyd is shouting it can breathe. Unlike Floyd, we at the MRCG comprising ten national media organizations are optimistic that our call is being heeded. We are confident that we will breathe,"

Parliamentary Practice & Procedures

Sierra Leone Parliament in Review

By Melvin Tejan-Mansaray

The First and Second week of July, 2020 was quite engaging and intriguing in the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

On Thursday 16th July, 2020, the House held its Seventh plenary sitting in the Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone. The sitting featured Mohamed Rahman Swaray Minister of Information and Communications' historic tabling, introduction, first and second reading of the bills, 'The Public Order (Amendment) Act, 2020' which seeks to repeal part five of the 1965 Public Order Act which criminalizes libel and sedition. This law has been described as dra-

conian and President Julius Maada Bio in his 2018 elections campaign promised to repeal it from the law books. The Independent Media Commission (IMC) Act, 2020 bill was also tabled the same day in Parliament. The bill seeks to sharpen the teeth of the IMC to regulate the media landscape in Sierra Leone.

Also, during this sitting Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Solomon Jamiru tabled two agreements (Cultural and Artistic Cooperation and Cooperation in the Field of Technical Education and Professional Training) between the Government of Sierra Leone and Government of the State of Kuwait.

On Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th July, 2020, the Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone with funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) commenced the review of the 'Parliamentary Service Act, 2007'. This two day workshop at the Committee Room No. 1, Sierra House of Parliament Building, Tower Hill Freetown focused on "The Parliamentary Service Act, 2007," an act that was piloted as a Private Member's motion by former President Dr. Ernest Bai Koro-

ma while serving as opposition leader. The Act has as its short title, (Being an Act to provide for the administration of Parliament and other related matters.)

"There is now need for us to look at the Act and look at other progressive Parliamentary Service Acts like in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia. We thought that in the light of both internal and external changing environments, we need to upgrade the Act to be in line with current practices and political socioeconomic context," Workshop Facilitator Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai former Minority Leader (2012-2018) and Vice President Pan Africa Parliament, said.

Again, Minister of Information and Communication Mohamed Rahman Swaray on Monday 13th July, 2020 delivered a presentation on two media related bills for the consideration of Members of Parliament (MPs), stakeholders and international development partners prior to their tabling in the Well of Parliament.

The public pre legislative hearing at Committee Room No.1 Parliament Building, Tower Hill Freetown was exhaustive and cumbersome on the bills, 'The Independent Media Com-

mission (IMC) Act, 2020,' and 'The Public Order Amendment Act, 2020.'

(POAA)' The IMC Act, 2020 and the POAA, 2020 (being an act of Parliament to amend the Public Order Act, 1965, Act No.46 of 1965 by repealing part five which deals with defamatory and seditious libel and to provide for other related matters). in particular has been a topic of discussion in Sierra Leone for the last fifty five years.

Interestingly, these two bills have been recommitted to the Legislative Committee for further scrutiny making room for skepticism and cynicism. Hon. Rosaline Jariatu Smith National Consultant goes public with a survey title "Evaluation of the Parliamentary Standing Orders (S.O.) and the Parliamentary Service Commission Act, 2007,' with a two page questionnaire with three sections (A,B and C) on identification, review of the current SO's and recommended Standing Order for Adoption.

The House also in the second first week of July took a long adjournment to join the family and relatives of the late sitting Member of Parliament Constituency 069 Honorable Alimamy O. Kamara for his funeral and interment in Bo District, Southern Sierra Leone. The late Hon. A.O. Kamara was the Chairman of the Parliamentary oversight Committee on Higher and Tertiary Education.

Monday July, 2020, the House goes into a pre legislative hearing on the two media bills with a hope to table in the Well for the third reading and enactment.

Coming up this week, Thursday 23rd July, 2020 is the eight plenary sitting for the session.

The House also in the second first week of July took a long adjournment to join the family and relatives of the late sitting Member of Parliament Constituency 069 Honorable Alimamy O. Kamara for his funeral and interment in Bo District, Southern Sierra Leone



Sierra Leone Parliament

Parliamentary Practice & Procedures

Last Week in Ghana's Parliament

By: Benjamin Opoku Aryeh

The Parliament of Ghana, in unison, adopted a motion for the enactment of Private Members' Bill on Thursday 16 July, 2020. This motion basically proposes that private members' bill become a part of the legislative architecture of the Parliament of Ghana. Indeed this single decision is historic and will go down as one of the major and bold decisions that the Seventh Parliament has taken in its life within the Fourth Republic. The enactment of a PMS' bill will enable individual Members of Parliament (MPs), private individuals and organisations, and civil society organisations to initiate the process of lawmaking on particular subjects of interest. Again, this goes to strengthen the oversight, lawmaking and representative roles of MPs and breaks the long-standing tradition that allows only the Executive are of Government to propose bills for enactment in Parliament.

Bills

A number of bills were taken through various stages of the law making in the House.

The Land Bill, 2019 continued under consideration as MPs debated each clause with proposed amendments. The Revenue Administration (Amendment) Bill, 2020 on the other hand was given a second reading and considered on the floor of the House. This Bill will amend existing regulations and establish an independent Tax Appeals Board to address compliance issues through alternative dispute resolution.

The Criminal Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was presented by the Leader of the Majority Caucus on behalf of the Attorney General and Minister for Justice, read the first time, and referred to the Committee on Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs for consideration and report.



Ghana Parliament House

The bill will amend the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29) to categorise the offence of corruption as a felony and provide a stiff penalty for a person who commits the offence of corruption.

Again, for the first time the Accident Investigation and Prevention Bureau Bill, 2020 was presented and read on the floor. The Bill was referred to the Committee on Roads and Transport for consideration and report.

The Minerals Income Investment Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was also presented to the House and read the first time, and referred to the Committee on Finance for consideration and report. The bill will amend the Minerals Investment Fund Act, 2018 (Act 278) to clarify the parameters of the operation of the minerals income investment fund.

The Securities and Intelligence Agencies Bill, 2020 was also presented and read for the first time and referred to Committee on Defence and Interior. The Committee presented its report on the determination of the urgency or otherwise of the bill.

Papers laid

The papers were laid by committee chairpersons and Ministers of State for consideration of the House.

The Representation of the People (Parliamentary Constituencies) Instrument, 2020 was laid by the House Leader and referred to the committee on Subsidiary

Legislation for consideration and report. The budget performance report in respect of the Ministry of Special Development Initiatives was also laid on the floor.

The Chairman of the Committee on Roads and Highways, Hon. Samuel Ayech-Paye, presented the committee's report on the Accident Investigation and Prevention Bureau Bill, 2020 and its determination of the urgency of the bill. The House finally agreed that the bill be taken under a certificate of urgency in order for Ghana to meet an international aviation assessment sometime next year (2021).

The Finance Committee presented its report on the request for waiver of Import Duty, Import NHIL, Import GETFund, Import VAT, EXIM Levy and Special Import Levy amounting to the Ghana Cedi equivalent of Three Million, Two Hundred and Fourteen Thousand, Five Hundred and Thirty-Eight United States Dollars (US\$3,214,538.00) on Kapek Scientific Mathematical Instruments (SMI) to be procured and supplied by M/s Blue Grass Group Limited for use in West African Examinations Council (WAEC) Examinations in Ghana.

Other reports of the Finance Committee on the request for waiver of Import Duty, Import NHIL, Import GETFund Levy, Import VAT, EXIM Levy amounting to the Ghana Cedi equivalent of One Million, Two Hundred and Eight Thousand, Four Hundred and Four United

States Dollars (US\$1,208,404.00) on Machinery, Equipment and raw materials to be procured by Accum Energy Ghana Limited under the One District One Factory (1D1F) programme; a report on the request for waiver of Import Duty, Import NHIL, Import GETFund Levy, Import VAT, EXIM Levy amounting to the Ghana Cedi equivalent of Eight Hundred and Fourteen Thousand, Eight Hundred and Seventy-Four United States Dollars (US\$814,874.00) on Machinery, Equipment and raw materials to be procured by Vestor Oil Mills Limited under the One District One Factory (1D1F) programme; and a report on the request for waiver of Import Duty, Import NHIL, Import GETFund Levy, Import VAT, EXIM Levy amounting to the Ghana Cedi equivalent of Forty-Four Thousand, Nine Hundred and Ninety United States Dollars (US\$44,990.00) on Machinery, Equipment and raw materials to be procured by Ada Premium Diaper Care Company Limited under the One District One Factory (1D1F) programme were presented to the House.

The Committee on Roads and Transport presented its report on the Determination of the Urgency or Otherwise of the Aircraft Accident Investigation and Prevention Bureau Bill, 2020

Committee

These committees met and conducted various business during the week.

The Committee on Finance met and continued consideration on the Development Finance Institutions Bill, 2020.

In addition, the committee considered a request for waiver of Import Duty, Import NHIL, Import GETFund, Import VAT, EXIM Levy and Special Import Levy amounting to the Ghana Cedi equivalent of Three Million, Two Hundred and Fourteen Thousand, Five Hundred and Thirty Eight United States Dollars (US\$3,214,538.00) on

Kapek Scientific Mathematical Instruments (SMI) to be procured and supplied by M/s Blue Grass Group Limited for the use in West African Examinations Council (WAEC) Examinations in Ghana; a request for waiver of Import Duties, Import VAT, GETFund Levy, Import NHIL Levy, EXIM Levy and Special Import Levy amounting to the Ghana Cedis equivalent of Eight Hundred and Seven-Eight Thousand, Three Hundred and Sixty-Four United States Dollars and Ninety-Two Cents (US\$ 878,364.92) on IT equipment, materials and services to be imported and procured locally for the implementation of the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) IT Training Academy Project; and a request for waiver of Import Duty, Import VAT, Import GETFund, Import NHIL, EXIM Levy, Special Import Levy and other approved imposts amounting to the Ghana Cedi equivalent of Four Million, Nine Hundred and Seven Thousand, Five Hundred and Fifty-Five ZAR (ZAR 4,907,555.00) on equipment, tools and hardware in respect of the Ghana Radio Astronomy Project and Colocation of the Satellite Earth Observation Ground Receiving Station at Kuntunse for Ghana Space Science & Technology Institute.

Statement

There was a statement made by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on Africa Integration Day which is intended to commemorate the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCTA) and to celebrate the promotion of the Africa integrated trade agenda.

The Week Ahead

On Thursday, 23 July, 2020 the Minister for Finance is expected to appear before the House to move a motion for the adoption of the mid-year budget review budget statement and economic policy of government for the 2020 financial year. Again, the House will continue sitting from Monday to Friday.



2020
INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF THE NURSE AND
THE MIDWIFE

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#COVID19

The world needs **millions more midwives and nurses**



Add your voice to those calling for
MORE INVESTMENT
in nurses and midwives

